

## **TELEWORK & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECURITY**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

*NOTE: Please review MPR 3000.1C for details*

#### **1. What is Telework?**

Public Law 106-346, Section 359 defines telework as any arrangement in which an employee regularly performs officially assigned duties at home or other worksites geographically convenient to the residence of the employee. Teleworking allows eligible employees to perform work at a location other than their official duty station. Teleworking is an innovative management option, not an employee entitlement. Teleworking does not change the terms and conditions of appointment, the time an employee is expected to work, job responsibilities, or benefits.

#### **2. What are the Telework options?**

**Core** is the approved telework arrangement performed at an alternative worksite on a regular and recurring basis that shall occur at least twice each biweekly pay period and does not include episodic telework. As a long term work arrangement the employee performs assigned duties during a pre-established tour of duty, e. g., 7:00 a.m-3:30 p.m. Participants shall report to the official duty station at least one day a week.

**Episodic** is the approved telework arrangement defined as situational meaning unscheduled, project oriented, non-recurring, and/or irregular telework and/or any teleworking that occurs less frequently than once a week on a recurring basis. Episodic telework consists of short periods of off-site work to complete a specific task or when commuting arrangements are disrupted by a national or location emergency. The episodic option allows participants, with approved medical documentation, recuperating from medically- related complications such as surgery, complications associated with pregnancy or other health conditions which limit mobility or ability to perform at the traditional worksite to work from home.

**Ineligible** for telework is when position requires on a regular and recurring basis direct handling of secure materials; employee performs on-site activities that cannot be conducted remotely or at an alternate worksite; and/or the employee's last performance rating of record is below fully successful or the employee's conduct has resulted in disciplinary action within the last year.

#### **3. What are the eligibility requirements?**

NASA's policy states that all employees are considered eligible for telework unless they are determined to be ineligible; however, an employee must obtain an electronic telework agreement. Approval for participation shall be determined on a case-by-case basis. The nature of the work shall be suitable for telework. For example, work shall be portable and

able to be performed effectively outside of the office without causing undue expense or disruption to the organization. Tasks shall be easily quantifiable, measurable, or primarily project-oriented (e.g., reading, processing tasks, writing proposals, computer-oriented tasks). Tasks and functions generally suited for Telework include but are not limited to: thinking and writing; policy development; research; analysis (e.g. investigating, program analysis, policy analysis, financial analysis); report writing; telephone intensive tasks; computer-oriented tasks (e.g. programming, data entry, word processing, Web page design); or data processing. Examples of tasks that are not suitable include those that require the employee to have daily face-to-face contact with the supervisor, colleagues, clients, or the general public in order to perform his/her job effectively and cannot otherwise be achieved via email, telephone, fax or similar electronic means; require daily access to classified information; or are part of trainee or entry-level positions.

Additional requirements are outlined in MPR 3000.1.

#### **4. Are there any positions excluded from program participation?**

All employees are eligible for telework either on a regular and recurring basis or on an occasional, non-routine basis unless there is a business based reason to be determined ineligible.

#### **5. Can I decide what hours I will work?**

Discuss work hours with your supervisor. The basic work week established for MSFC is a 40 hour week consisting of five eight (8) hour days to be worked between 7:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. You may work a regular schedule or follow an alternative work schedule depending upon the agreement between the supervisor and you. You must work the same hours every day unless advanced supervisory approval is obtained. Completely unstructured arrangements will not be permitted.

#### **6. Will overtime or compensatory time be approved?**

Approval must be obtained from your supervisor prior to working overtime or compensatory time. The existing rules in Title 5, U. S. C and in the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) governing overtime apply to telework participants. You must request and obtain approval in advance of any work in excess of your normal hours of duty. The MGM 3600.1 and AFGE and MESA agreements provide the Center policy on overtime.

#### **7. Will the policies for requesting leave change?**

No. Policies for requesting leave such as annual leave, sick leave, and leave without pay remain unchanged. You are responsible for requesting leave in advance from your supervisor and documenting leave usage in WebTADS.

#### **8. What is the impact of administrative leave, dismissals, or emergency closings on telework participants?**

The principles governing administrative leave, dismissals, or emergency closings remain unchanged. The ability to conduct work (and the nature of the impediments) whether at home or at the office, determines when teleworkers may be excused from duty. As a telework participant you may sometimes, but not always, be affected by an emergency requiring the regular office to close. For example, on a “snow day” telework employees will not be excused from work unless he or she cannot perform work because the regular office is closed. When an emergency such as power failure, affects only the alternative worksite for a major portion of the workday you may be required to report to the regular office, take approved annual leave, leave-without-pay, or receive an authorized excused absence.

### **9. How do I charge my time?**

NASA’s time and attendance reporting system, WebTADS, is used to record and report telework eligibility and specific telework arrangements

The assigned hours of work while teleworking form part of the employee's normal tour of duty. Time spent in a telework status must be accounted for and reported in the same manner as if the employee reported for duty at traditional worksite. If your time is split working at home and reporting to MSFC, please note that commute time to work shall not be recorded as time work nor should lunch be shown as time worked, only the time that you actually began your work day. In those exceptional circumstances where an employee teleworks full-time from a location outside of the local commuting area of the traditional worksite, and his/her alternative worksite has been determined as the official worksite, management funds all work-related travel outside the employee’s normal commuting area, including travel to the traditional worksite. Any questions regarding how to report your time can be directed to Program Coordinator.

### **10. How will my work performance be measured when I am not physically present?**

Supervisors can measure what you produce by examining the product or results of your efforts. You may be measured by how well you meet project schedules, key milestones, regular status reports, and team reviews. Teleworkers are required to complete all assigned work, consistent with the approach adopted for all other employees in the work group and according to standards and guidelines in the employee's performance plan. The performance standards shall be based on a results-oriented approach and shall describe the quantity and quality of expected work products and the method of evaluation.

Teleworkers shall have a proven, or expected (for new employees), performance rating of at least "Meets Expectation," or equivalent to be eligible for participation and there shall be a reasonable expectation that the employee's performance while in a Telework arrangement will continue to remain at least at the "Meets Expectation," level.

### **11. Will my position description change?**

Telework does not require a change in either the position description or the performance plan because telework does not change the employee's position duties or performance elements. The employee is simply performing assigned duties at an alternate worksite. Supervisors will assess performance standards to determine whether changes, if any, are required.

### **12. Do I have a right to telecommute? Could I be forced to work at home?**

No. Subject to any applicable union agreement, management decides whether you can work off-site, depending on the nature of the position and your suitability. Management may terminate your participation at any time if your performance declines, or if the arrangement no longer meets the organization's needs.

### **13. What should I know about Information Security and Records Management?**

No classified document (hard copy or electronic) shall be taken to an employee's alternative worksite. Off-site access to classified data shall not be permitted. Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU) material such as International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) and Export Administration Regulations (EAR)), including Privacy Act and For Official Use Only material, may only be used by teleworkers provided with Government-furnished equipment. The removal of Privacy Act and other sensitive information for Telework assignments shall require supervisory approval and prior coordination with the supervisor. SBU information must be accompanied by NASA Form 1686, "Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU)," and shall be attached in the proper location in accordance with established guidelines. Official records removed for telework assignments shall remain the property of MSFC, and any records generated from telework assignments shall become the property of MSFC. Information that is sensitive or subject to the Privacy Act shall be identified as

such, and employees counseled on proper use and safeguarding of the documents. Special care shall be given to sensitive information accessible via computer equipment. Information shall be accessible only by use of effective passwords that are changed frequently. Sensitive information stored on personal computers shall be irretrievable prior to servicing the equipment. Note: Information “removed” using software deletion commands (‘remove,’ ‘erase,’ or ‘delete’) may indicate that information has been deleted but in certain situations may still be retrievable.

**14. Will my pay be affected? Will my official duty station change?**

A teleworker’s official worksite for such purposes as special salary rates, locality pay adjustments, and travel is established by Federal rules in Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 531.605(d). A telework employee’s official worksite shall be documented in the WebTADS Telework Agreement Request. In most cases telework does not alter an employee’s salary. However, because of locality pay rates, there may be a difference if the official worksite changes. Employees approved for telework are required to report to the official worksite at least twice each biweekly pay period on a regular and recurring basis unless an exception as outlined in the MPR is met.

**15. Are there any safety standards that I must meet?**

Yes. You must complete the WebTADS Telework Agreement Request prior to entering the Telework Program. You must certify that safety standards are met to the best of your knowledge and clearly identify those safety standards that cannot be met. You will be covered by the Federal Employees Compensation Act. In accordance with 5 CFR 20, Subpart B, on the job injuries must be brought to the immediate attention of the supervisor and are subject to investigation.

**16. Are there any facilities issues that I need to be aware of?**

Yes. MSFC office space may not be maintained for core telework participants.

For work-at-home arrangements, the employee shall designate one area in the home as the official work station. The Government’s potential exposure to liability is restricted to this official work station for the purposes of telework.

Incremental home utility costs associated with working at home will not be paid by MSFC.

**17. Will the Center reimburse me for miscellaneous expenses incurred?**

No. Costs associated with the printing or copying of work-related materials, fax charges, express mail, etc. will not be reimbursed by MSFC. These tasks should be performed at the duty station using MSFC equipment, services, and materials.

**18. Will the Center reimburse me for business-related long distance and toll phone calls made from my personal telephone?**

Yes. MSFC will provide telephone credit cards or will reimburse you, if you are working under an approved telework agreement, for business-related long distance and toll phone calls made from your personal phone. You must certify that all usage of such services is for official Government business.

**19. May I use Agency-owned equipment?**

Yes. Agency-owned/provided equipment may be used by employees in their private residence provided the equipment is available and is used only for official business. In most cases, a user's desktop system shall be replaced by a laptop system while participating in the Program. The user's data shall be transferred to the laptop for use while offsite. Any cost differential between a desktop and a laptop shall be the responsibility of the user's organization. Upon conclusion of the Telework Program, all data shall be transferred to the employee's original type of desktop system. The laptop shall be turned in and the Outsourcing Desktop Initiative for NASA (ODIN) seat rate adjusted to the appropriate amount for a desktop system. No connection services such as cable, a digital subscriber line (DSL), or in-home wireless networks shall be supplied unless prior arrangements are made with the employee's organization. All assistance shall be provided by the ODIN Help Desk by calling (256) 544-4357. Employees approved by the Center to use their own personal computers and equipment for Telework on non-sensitive unclassified data are responsible for the installation, repair, and maintenance of any personal equipment. Strict adherence to regulations concerning the safeguarding and removal of all equipment is essential. Agency-owned computer equipment shall be returned to MSFC for servicing by authorized technicians. Issues regarding damaged or lost equipment are handled through the Survey Report process outlined in MWI 4200.1, "Equipment Control." Personnel carrying Government property on-site or off-site shall obtain a Mobile Equipment Property Pass (MSFC Form 4373). All Government-furnished equipment and material must be returned to the Center upon conclusion of the Telework arrangement or at the Center's request for yearly scanning.

**20. Will my telework worksite be inspected?**

An employee on a telework arrangement shall permit inspections of the telework work location during the employee's normal duty hours.

**21. Are there any tax considerations?**

If you believe you are entitled to tax deductions on home office or work space, depreciation of employee-owned personal computers and related equipment, etc., you should consult your personal tax advisor or the Internal Revenue Service for information on tax laws and interpretations. This is a matter strictly between you and the Internal Revenue Service.

**22. How may I apply for the program?**

Employees shall establish a WebTADS Telework Agreement Request following the procedure outlined in the WebTADS Online Quick Reference Guide for the Automated Telework Request and Approval Process. The request for either core or episodic is available on the Leave Balance page in WebTADS. The employee must electronically submit the Telework Agreement Request to the first-line supervisor.

**23. Are there any re-application and/or certification requirements that I need to be aware of?**

Yes. The Telework Agreement is a living document and shall be reviewed by the supervisor and teleworker at least annually to identify any changes. A new Telework Agreement shall be required when a telework employee is reassigned, detailed, promoted to a different position, or a change in duty station occurs as documented in the initial Telework Agreement.

**24. Will I be able to make changes to my work schedule?**

Yes. Telework schedules shall remain fixed until changes are requested by the employee and approved by the supervisor. Changes shall be accommodated by the supervisor when practicable and consistent with mission requirements. Except in unusual circumstances and when approved by the supervisor, core telework participants shall report to the official duty station at least one day per week. Participants recuperating from medically-related complications such as surgery, complications associated with pregnancy, or other health conditions which limit mobility or ability to perform at the traditional worksite typically do not have in-office days and shall work a full-time or part-time schedule from the alternative worksite. Management reserves the right to direct an employee scheduled for telework to report to his/her official duty station for: meetings, receiving work assignments, training, travel, unscheduled absences of other employees, emergency situations, or other situations deemed necessary by the supervisor to meet mission, staffing and workload requirements. The supervisor shall give the employee as much notice as possible of the need to report to the official duty station. There shall be no “carryovers” of “missed” telework days from week-to-week.

**25. How can I terminate my telework arrangement?**

Following the directions outlined in the WebTADS Online Quick Reference Guide for the Automated Telework Request and Approval Process, Telework arrangements can be terminated by the employee or supervisor at any time upon sufficient notice to ensure management and employee have adequate time to plan for reverting to a regular work environment and schedule. Reasons for withdrawing or terminating employee participation may include: arrangement is not consistent with the staffing, workload and mission requirements of the office; employee fails to truthfully report time worked; employee fails to meet established deadlines or does not progress satisfactorily on assignments; employee fails to adhere to the provisions of the Telework Agreement or fails to meet obligations under the program; employee’s availability or conduct while performing telework assignments is questionable; or loss of interest in the Telework Program. The telework

arrangement shall be terminated when a telework employee is reassigned, detailed, promoted to a different position, or a change in duty station occurs; the supervisor of a telework employee changes; or the designated official work station area in the home changes. A performance appraisal of "Fails to Meet Expectations" automatically terminates your participation. Terminations shall be documented in the WebTADS Telework Agreement.

## **26. Will participation in this program help my child or other dependent care needs?**

Telework is not a substitute for child or elder care. Telework will allow you more flexibility in accommodating your child or elder care needs but cannot replace them. You must not assume that because you are working from home you can also take care of children and/or an elderly parent(s). If your home contains an infant, toddler or elderly family members who need care, you may want to wait until you have additional help at home or make other arrangements for their care before you start Telework.

## **TELEWORK Information Technology (IT) Security**

**Reference Document: NPD 2540.1F - Personal Use of Government Office Equipment Including Information Technology.**

1. Will MSFC provide me a computer to use at home for telework?

**Answer: If available a computer may be provided for telework use at home. If you have a desktop system, the best solution will be to temporarily transfer your data to a laptop that will provide you with the mobility associated/required with the Telework Program.**

2. Can I use my own computer for telework, or must I use one provided by MSFC?

**Answer: Use of your own personal computer is permitted, so long as you maintain it in an adequately secured hardware and software condition. At a minimum, it needs to have anti-virus which can be obtained from MSFC ODIN and kept current with patches. For Microsoft, using Windows Update to be notified of new patches. Contact the MSFC IT Security Manager for specific requirements. Also, refer to NPD 2540.1F for information regarding Personal Use of Government Office Equipment Including Information Technology.**

3. Can I use the MSFC Telework computer for unlimited personal use?

**Answer: No. Your personal use of a Government computer provided for telework is subject to the same usage conditions placed on your MSFC workplace computer.**



**Refer to NPD 2540.1F for in-depth information regarding Personal Use of Government Office Equipment Including Information Technology.**

4. If I use my own computer for telework, what restrictions or conditions would be placed on personal use of it?

**Answer:** The computer hardware and the software applications must be adequately secured and the NASA information stored on the computer must be protected from loss or compromise. Personal use of the computer must in no way violate NASA acceptable use policies, nor cause an impact to (1) the processing or storage of NASA information storage of SBU information is not allowed) or (2) to any NASA network when connected to the computer. **Refer to NPD 2540.1F for NASA policy on inappropriate personal uses.**

5. Will special security or monitoring software be put on my home computer if it is used for Telework?

**Answer:** Anti-virus software will be provided for home computer use for those Telework users who use a computer at the MSFC workplace. Others (non-MSFC related) who use their own computer in the Telework Program must provide and install anti-virus software on their home computers.

No monitoring or “spy-ware” software will be installed on the computer. However, in accordance with the NASA computer log-on warning banner, while connected to NASA networks, data emanating from the home computer may be monitored if they flow over the NASA network.

6. Will my telework computer at home be under the same security policies as my MSFC computer?

**Answer:** When connected to MSFC networks and/or containing NASA information, the telework computer will be under the same policies as MSFC computers.

7. Should I use a home firewall with my telework computer?

**Answer:** While MSFC does not provide home, or “personal,” firewall software at this time, it is recommended that Telework users provide and install this protection on the telework computer used at home. Microsoft XP SP2 provides firewall software or your home network router usually has a firewall built in to the device as well.

8. Can MSFC provide some recommendations for home computer security?

**Answer:**

Here are the “Top 11” recommendations for home computer users:

1. **Install "anti-virus software" on your home computer and keep it up to date and active. See question #5**
2. **Don't open email from unknown sources. Modern computer viruses often masquerade as mail from people you know. If someone you know has sent you an attachment make sure it is scanned by your (up to date) anti-virus software before opening it.**
3. **Use hard-to-guess passwords that contain at least one upper case, one lowercase letter, and one number.**
4. **If your operating system supports user ids and passwords, log out when you're done. Use this capability on Microsoft computer as an extra precaution. Windows XP Home version can support user identification and password. Disable Guest.**
5. **Protect your home computer from Internet intruders by using a personal firewall. (Either hardware or software).**
6. **Don't share access to your computers with strangers. Learn about file sharing risks. Don't sign up for "Napster" like programs which open your computer to strangers. Be mindful of children using your system if it contains sensitive data.**
7. **Disconnect your computer from the Internet when not in use (for Cable and DSL, make sure to power off when not using).**
8. **Back up your computer data regularly.**
9. **Regularly download security vulnerability protection update "patches" for your computer.**
10. **Check your security settings on a regular basis, and re-evaluate your home computer security posture at least on a monthly basis.**
11. **Make sure your family members know what to do if your computer becomes infected with hostile code such as a computer virus, worm, or Trojan. Contact the ODIN Help Desk if your NASA computer is affected. Be mindful of children using your system if it contains sensitive data.**